



## What To Look For During A Race

At the starting line, when all crews are aligned, that is, when the BOWS (the front of the boat) of all the boats are even with each other, the starter will give commands to start the race. The starting commands are, "Sit Ready... Ready All...Row".

At the start, the crew's objective is to get the boat moving quickly and cleanly. Look for boats whose starting strokes are made in unison and whose oars enter (CATCH) and exit (RELEASE) the water cleanly and quickly.

The STROKE RATE (the number of strokes per minute) at the start is usually high since the crews wish to sprint away from the starting line in order to gain an early advantage. Once the starting sequence is completed, most crews will lower their stroke rates to their SETTLE RATE, which is the stroke rate at which they will row the main body of the race. The crew "SETTLES" in order to conserve energy so that they can maintain their boat speed.

At predetermined points in the race, the COXSWAIN (the person who steers the boat and executes race strategy) will call for a POWER 10 or a POWER 20. These "Powers" are 10 or 20 strokes at maximum strength to make up ground or increase a lead.

As the boats approach the finish line they will again raise their STROKE RATES in preparation for the final spring to the finish line.

The seats in a boat are always numbered from bow to stern, making the rower who sits in the bow "1 SEAT" or "BOW". In an EIGHT (a boat with eight rowers) the "STROKE" (the 1<sup>st</sup> person before the coxswain) is "4 SEAT". In a FOUR (a boat with four rowers) the Stroke is "4 SEAT".

All boats are assigned a racing lane. If during the race the boat leaves its assigned lane and interferes with another crew the boat will be disqualified. If a boat leaves its assigned lane but does not impede the progress of another crew, the race will be allowed to continue.

During the course of the race, the spectator should look for boats with SWING. Boats with SWING will have the shoulders and upper body of every rower moving together during the DRIVE, the most powerful segment of the stroke.

Good crews will have good SPACING or RUN (the distance between each stroke). This indicates that the crew is strong and efficient.

Crews with good rowing technique will always appear smooth and graceful and will make the rowing motion seem effortless.

Since the races are often won by hundredths of a second, well-trained crews will stay focused and disciplined as they approach the finish line and fatigue becomes a factor.

Referees accompany each race as it moves down the course. They are responsible for keeping the official race time, assuring a fair race for all crews, and registering and responding to all reasonable protests.